



Talent Agents: Why This Matters to You and How to Speak Up

What's Going On?

The Ontario government is asking the public, especially performers like you, what they think about regulating talent agents.

Right now, in Ontario, anyone can call themselves a talent agent. There are **no rules** about how they handle your money, how much they can charge you, or what happens if they don't pay you on time, or at all.

ACTRA Toronto has been pushing for proper rules and protections to keep performers safe and paid fairly. The Ontario government is listening, and your voice is needed to get this across the finish line. **The government won't share your responses with anyone, so please be open and honest!**

Why It Matters

Here's what's at stake:

- **Unpaid or delayed cheques:** Some performers, and ACTRA, have had to chase agents for money that's owed.
- **No rules on fees:** Agents can charge what they want. Some take more than they should.
- **No trust account rules:** If an agency goes bankrupt, your money could disappear.
- **No licence needed:** Anyone can open a talent agency in Ontario. That means no background checks, no training, and no standards.

What the Government Wants to Know (and some thoughts on how you can answer)

1. What is a "Performer"?

The government wants to define a performer as anyone who acts, sings, dances, or appears on screen or stage, including background performers.

Suggested response:

"Yes, I agree. This definition includes the many ways performers work in the industry."

2. What is a “Talent Agency”?

They want to define a talent agent as someone who finds work for performers, for a fee.

Suggested response:

“Yes, this is a good definition. It matches what talent agents do.”

3. To what extent are performers experiencing non-payment or underpayment by talent agents?

They want to understand how often this happens.

Suggested response 1:

“It happens more than it should, and it needs to stop.”

Suggested response 2:

“I have heard of it happening from time to time, but it should never happen.”

Suggested response 3:

“I’ve never heard of it happening.”

4. Are you aware of an issue with talent agents not paying performers in a timely manner? How widespread is it?

The government wants an idea of how widespread this problem is.

Suggested response 1:

“Yes. I’ve either experienced late payment myself or know others who have. Some agents pay quickly and fairly, but there are definitely agencies where performers wait weeks, or longer, to get paid. It’s a real problem and not rare.”

Suggested response 2:

“I haven’t personally had this issue, but I’ve heard many stories from other performers who have. Late or missing payments seem to happen too often. There’s no way to hold agents accountable right now, so it keeps happening.”

Suggested response 3:

“Yes, this happens often enough that performers talk about it regularly. It’s not just one or two bad apples.”

5. Have you ever experienced delayed (e.g. more than 14 days) or missing payments from a talent agent for work you completed? If so, what steps did you take to seek payment, and what resources or supports were available to assist you?

Suggested response 1:

“Yes. I’ve waited more than 14 days for payment after a job. I followed up with my agent several

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times, but it was stressful and took a long time. I didn't really know where to go for help, and I worried that speaking up might affect future work. I called my union, but even they are limited in how much they can get involved. Performers need better protection and someone we can go to when this happens."

Suggested response 2:

"Yes, I had to follow up multiple times to get paid. It felt like I was bothering them just to get the money I was owed. I didn't know what other support was out there. I felt stuck."

Suggested response 3:

"I haven't had this issue personally, but I know it's happened to many others. I still support stronger rules to make sure all performers are paid fairly and on time."

6. Should there be a limit on agent fees?

In British Columbia, agents can't charge more than 15%. Should Ontario have a similar rule?

Suggested response:

"Yes. 15% or less is fair. There should also be clear rules about what extra fees agents can charge, and it should be easy to understand. This kind of transparency helps protect performers."

7. Should agents be required to keep your money in a trust account?

This is the big one! This would protect your money, especially if the agent goes bankrupt. A trust account is a special kind of bank account that holds someone else's money safely until it's ready to be paid out.

In this case, it means:

- The money a performer earns from a job goes into the trust account.
- The talent agent is not allowed to use that money for anything else.
- The agent must pay the performer from the trust account within the agreed time.
- If the agent goes bankrupt or disappears, the performer's money is still protected.

Think of it like a locked box. The money inside belongs to the performer, and the agent is only the keyholder, not the owner.

Suggested response:

"Yes. This would make sure my pay is safe. It's basic financial protection."

8a. Should talent agents be licensed (regulated) in Ontario?

Right now, they don't need a licence to operate.

Suggested response:

“Yes. Licensing would set clear rules and make it easier to stop bad-faith agents from working. It’s about protecting performers.”

8b. What should it take to get a licence?

Examples: a trust account, listing the owners, a background check, or a bond (money held in case they break the rules).

Suggested response:

“A licence should require a trust account, background checks, and a way to hold the agency accountable if something goes wrong. TAMAC has a voluntary code of conduct that is a great template.”

8c. Are there other problems with agents that need rules?

Think beyond money: misrepresentation, pressuring clients, or not being honest about work opportunities.

Suggested response:

“Yes. Agents should follow a code of conduct that protects performers. There should be clear rules and a way to report bad behaviour to a licensing body.”

9. How should rules be enforced?

Suggested response:

“There should be a place to file complaints and real consequences for agents who break the rules, like fines, licence suspension, or being shut down.”

10. Other jurisdictions require talent agents to have a licence. Should Ontario have a licensing framework for talent agents? Why or why not?

The goal here is to level the playing field so that Ontario performers have the same rights as their peers in British Columbia.

Suggested response 1:

“Yes. Licensing should be required. Agents hold our money and represent us in our careers. There should be clear rules and consequences if they don’t follow them. Licensing would help weed out bad-faith agents and protect performers. It’s only fair.”

Suggested response 2 – add personal experience:

“Yes. I’ve worked with both good and bad agents. With no licensing, there’s no way to tell the

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*difference until it's too late. A licensing system would give performers more safety and peace of mind. **[now add your own personal experience].**"*

Follow-up: *If so, what should be the requirements to obtain a licence?*

Suggested response (include all or some as you like):

To get a licence, agents should:

- Be required to use a trust account to hold client money safely.
- Provide a security deposit or bond in case something goes wrong.
- Register all owners and partners, so we know who's responsible.
- Pass a background check.
- Follow a code of conduct with clear rules about fairness and payment.
- Take part in basic training about working with performers.

11: Are there alternative approaches that we should consider? Are there any additional measures that should be taken to ensure transparency in the agent-client relationship?

Suggested response 1 – focused on transparency:

"Even with or without licensing, there should be clear written agreements between agents and performers that outline how money will be handled and when payments are due. Agents should be required to send regular statements to their clients showing what's been received and what's been paid."

Suggested response 2 – on accountability:

"There should be a place where performers can make complaints about agents without fear of losing work. Right now, too many people stay silent because they're scared to speak up."

Suggested response 3 – tech-forward:

"Maybe agents should have to use an online payment tracking system, so performers can log in and see what's going on with their money."

12. Anything else you want to say?

Suggested response:

"This is a long overdue step. Performers need protections, and talent agents should be held to professional standards."

How to Submit Your Comments

Deadline: August 22, 2025

You can send your answers by **email** or **mail**:

Email:

Talent-Agencies-Consultation@ontario.ca

Mail:

Talent Agencies Consultation

Employment, Labour Policy and Special Projects Branch

Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development

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Final Tip

You don't need to answer every question. Even one or two answers from your own experience can make a big difference.

Your story matters. Let's make sure Ontario protects performers like you.